

The Book of Isaiah

Chapter 40

Comforting Words to the People of God, Israel

As has been discussed in the introduction this chapter marks the great division of the book. This division is so notable that liberal scholars believe a different "Isaiah" wrote chapters 40-66. This heresy is discussed in Appendix C and is brought to not by the words of our Lord in where He quotes from both portions of Isaiah but attributes them to one person, Esaias (Isaiah):

"But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore, they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." (Joh 12:37-41)

Isaiah 40 -66 can be outlined like the following:

40-48 The **Greatness** of God compared to the vanity of man's idols.

49-57 The **Grace** of God manifested in His Son.

58-66 The **Glory** of God revealed in the kingdom of His Son.

Comforting Words for God's People (1-11): This chapter sets the tone for the whole chapter and ultimately the rest of Isaiah.

(vss. 1-2) The "comfort" is to Jerusalem. The comforting words are that the "warfare" and "iniquity" against Jerusalem and ultimately God's people are over. It is looking at a time when all her punishments have been delt out. The "city of Peace" will experience finally be

The Pardon of God's People: Israel sinfulness will be pardoned, and her troubles will be over at the end of the tribulation (**Jer. 31:31-34; 50:20; Ezek. 36:24-28; Heb. 8:10-12**).

The Payment for Her Sins: Israel's history is one of suffering for her sins. Truly she has reaped according to **Leviticus 26:14-46 (see Appendix O)**.

(vs. 3) John the Baptist, the Voice in the wilderness. The book of Matthew makes this clear this passage is fulfilled in the person of John the Baptist note the two passages compared:

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (Isa 40:3)

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, (Mt 3:1)

For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, **The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.** (Mt 3:3)

And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, **I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.** (Joh 1:21-23)

But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. **And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.** (Lu 1:13-17)

(vss. 4-5) Making Straight the Way of the Lord: I understand this to mean that John the Baptist roll is to make "straight the way of the Lord" by "making ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17).

Thus, Isaiah describes this "straightening" in poetic verbiage:

Valley shall be exalted - Lowly and humble shall be exalted

Mountain and hill made low - Proudful in heart shall be abased

Crooked made straight – Those that are of a crooked spirit, and walk in crooked ways, with the workers of iniquity, shall be directed to right ways, and be led in the straight and narrow path of righteousness.

Rough places made plain – Whatever obstructions were in the way of embracing Christ as Messiah through John the Baptist ministry would be removed.

(vss. 6-8) The Cry of the Voice in the Wilderness (a continuation of making and preparing a people to receive their Messiah)

(vs. 6) All flesh is Grass

(vs. 7, 8) The Grass withereth

(vs. 6) Goodness of the grass is as the flower of the field

(vs. 7, 8) The flower fadeth

(vs. 8) But the word of our God shall stand for ever

(vss. 9-11) Behold Your God: This is a prophetic utterance Zion, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah to “be not afraid” for “behold your God!” (vs. 9). This prophetic utterance is comforting words to His people. He will come with “strong hand and his arm shall rule for him” and “his reward is with him and his work before him” (vs. 10).

For the LORD shall comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody. Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people. My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust. (Isa 51:3-5)

And, behold, I come quickly; and **my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.** (Re 22:12)

The Greatness of God (vss. 12-17): The haughtiness of man will demand God to put him in his place as in Job 38-42.

All Mighty in Scope (vs. 12)

All Mighty in Knowledge (vss. 13-14)

All Mighty in Strength (vss. 15-18)

The Insignificance of Idols (vss. 18-27): The sin that does so easily beset Israel has always been idol worship. God warned the nation:

And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee. (De 7:16)

Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you. (Jg 2:3)

They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions. (Ps 106:34-39)

(vss. 18 cf. 25) To whom can you liken God? Can an image be made of Him? What can be likened to God? The second member of the Godhead is the closest we will ever get:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (Heb 1:1-3)

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto

him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, **Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father;** and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? (Joh 14:6-9)

(vs. 19) The rich man's idol.

(vs. 20) The poor man's idol.

(vss. 21) Psalm 19:1-3. The heavens declare the glory of God therefore all mankind is accountable for a knowledge of Him.

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; **for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:** Because that, when **they knew God, they glorified him not as God,** neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And **changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.** Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. (Ro 1:19-25)

(vs. 22) While this is metaphorical it also gives insight into how God created the heavens and their purpose.

It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; **that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain,** and **spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:** (Isa 40:22)

The truth of this passage and a host of others would fall under the classification of Biblical Astrology. It would help understand such things as why "darkness was upon the face of the deep" and why God created the sun moon and stars. Not to mention why God created the earth in the first place. (See Appendix P).

(vs. 23-24, 26) The Lord is allowing the princes and judges of this have their "day" however there will be a end to their rule, for the Lord will have His "day" the "day of the Lord". Notice the references are that of Israel (vs. 27).

(vs. 26) This as well is concerning Biblical Astrology. The host is the heavenly body and their constellations.

He **telleth the number of the stars**; he **calleth them all by their names**.
Great is our Lord, and of great power: **his understanding is infinite**. (Ps 147:4-5)

The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.
Canst thou bind the **sweet influences of Pleiades**, or **loose the bands of Orion**? Canst thou bring forth **Mazzaroth in his season**? or canst thou guide **Arcturus with his sons**? Knowest thou the **ordinances of heaven**? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? (Job 38:30-33)

* Pleiades is a star cluster in the constellation of Taurus. The stars are bound together by mutual gravitational attraction. - Sweet influence

* The Bands of Orion are the three stars that make up Orion's belt.

* Mazzaroth is the constellation signs, the Zodiac. The path the sun takes through the heavens is the Zodiac (meaning path or way).

The Everlasting Strength of God (28-31): The Lord does not grow weary, nor is His understanding limited:

"Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite." (Ps 147:5).

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. (Ro 11:33-36)

(vs. 29) All throughout the bible it is God that giveth strength. David thought the Psalms praise God for giving him strength:

The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him. The LORD is their strength, and he is the saving strength of

his anointed. Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever. (Ps 28:7-9)

(vs. 31) The prophetic reference is to the Remnant in the Tribulation Period:

And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. (Re 12:14)